

Message Text

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ACTION CU-04

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 NEA-10 ISO-00 PA-02 /027 W

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P 251822Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9590

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT UNN

UNCLAS MEXICO 7533

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SCUL LE US/LEBANESE COMMUNITIES

SUB: WISH TO GIVE US A MONUMENT FOR BICENTENNIAL

DEPT PASS TO MR. WILLIAM BLUE IN BICENTENNIAL COMMISSION

REF: JOVA-BLUE TELECON OF AUGUST 19

1. SUMMARY: ELEBANON'S AMBASSADOR TO MEXICO, JOSEPH NAFFAH, CALLED ON AMBASSADOR JOVA TOGETHER WITH HIS BROTHER, JORGE NAFFAH, AND FATHER STEVEN JOHN ON AUGUST 19 IN ORDER TO ASK JOVA'S ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE IN INITIATING DISCUSSIONS ON BUILDING A MONUMENT TO TEACHERS IN THE US DURING THE BICENTENNIAL YEAR. END SUMMARY.

2. AMB NAFFAH EXPLAINED THAT THE PROPOSED MONUMENT WOULD BE DEDICATED TO TEACHERS WHO HAD CONTRIBUTED SO MUCH TO HUMANITY AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT. THE PROJECT WILL BE SUPPORTED BY DONATIONS OF LEBANESE COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT LATIN AMERICA AND THE UNITED STATES. ALTHOUGH NOT AN OFFICIAL LEBANESE GOVERNMENT PROJECT, IT HAS THE GOL APPROVAL. AMB. NAFFAH REPORTED THAT HE ALREADY HAS \$40,000 IN PLEDGES FOR THE PROJECT AND THAT HE PROPOSES TO MAKE HIS BROTHER, JORGE NAFFAH, (A LEBANESESE BUSINESSMAN IN MEXICO) OVER-ALL COORDINATOR FOR THE PROJECT AND FATHER SEVEN JOHN, OF THE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN, OF THE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN, COORDINATOR IN THE US.

2. AMB NAFFAH SAID THAT THEY HOPED THAT THE USG WOULD BE
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ABLE TO DONATE SUITABLE GROUNDS FOR THE MONUMENT SOMEWHERE

CLOSE TO CONGRESS OR THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, WHICH HE NOTED HAS A FIGURE OF CADMUS, THE INVENTOR OF THE ALPHABET, ON ONE OF ITS DOORS -- NAFAH THOUGHT A LOCATION NEAR THE TRIBUTE TO CADMUS WOULD BE PARTICULARLY APPROPRIATE.

3. AMB NAFFAH NOTED THAT ARRANGEMENTS WOULD HAVE TO BE MADE QUICKLY IF THE PROJECT WERE TO BE COMPLETED IN THE BICENTENNIAL YEAR. HE ADDED THAT HIS BROTHER AND FATHER JOHN WERE PREPARED TO GO TO WASHINGTON AND REQUESTED AMB JOVA'S ADVICE ON WHOM THEY SHOULD SEE. AMB JOVA TELEPHONED MR. WILLIAM BLUE OF THE BICENTENNIAL COMMISSION IN ORDER TO INFORM HIM ABOUT THIS OFFER. MR. BLUE SAID THAT HE WOULD BE AVAILABLE TO MEET WITH MR. JORGE NAFFAH AND FATHER JOHN THE WEEK OF AUGUST 25 IN ORDER TO DISCUSS THE MATTER.

4. MR. NAFFAH REPORTS THAT HE AND FATHER JOHN EXPECT TO ARRIVE IN WASHINGTON ON AUGUST 25 OR 26.

5. FYI: WHEN AMB JOVA DEMURRED AT GETTING DIRECTLY INVOLVED, AMB NAFFAH EXPLAINED THAT HE WAS FORCED TO SEEK AMB JOVA'S ASSISTANCE IN THIS MATTER BECAUSE LEBANON'S CURRENT AMB IN WASHINGTON WAS IN THE PROCESS OF DEPARTING POST AND THAT HE DID NOT KNOW WHEN A REPLACEMENT WOULD BE NAMED AND THEREFORE HAD NO ONE TO TURN TO IN WASHINGTON, (WE MAY BE CONFUSED ON THIS) - AND, IN ANY CASE, THIS WAS AN EFFORT ON THE PART OF THE LEBANESE COMMUNITIES OF THE HEMISPHERE RATHER THAN ON THE GOL AND IT WAS PREFERABLE TO DEPOLITICIZE THE MATTER.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MONUMENTS, GIFTS, INDEPENDENCE CELEBRATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 AUG 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975MEXICO07533
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750293-1109
From: MEXICO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750821/aaaaasot.tel
Line Count: 89
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION CU
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: hartledg
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18 DEC 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <18 DEC 2002 by ReddocGW>; APPROVED <27 JAN 2004 by hartledg>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: WISH TO GIVE US A MONUMENT FOR BICENTENNIAL DEPT PASS TO MR. WILLIAM BLUE IN BICENTENNIAL COMMISSION
TAGS: SCUL, LE, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006